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Doctor Is Requested To Review Reports Made In Child's Death

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ROCKVILLE — The doctor who performed the autopsy on John F. Kennedy has been called upon by the State's Attorney's office to review medical reports and studies done on the body of a three-month-old girl, who is alleged to have been the victim of child abuse.

The mother of the child, Melody Mary Ward, 20, of Germantown, was released on a \$2,500 bond Tuesday, according to sources close to the courthouse. She was charged with the child's murder on March 26. The baby, Sabrina Lynn, was later reported by the state

Medical Examiner's office to have died of natural causes.

A controversy arose over the cause of the infant's death because county Medical Examiner Beldon Reap stated Sabrina had bruises on her head and back when he examined her shortly after she died.

Sabrina's father, Gary, 22, who was charged with manslaughter, was released on bond Monday by Circuit Court Judge Joseph Mathias. The Wards had been held in separate mental hospitals where they were sent for evaluation after they entered pleas of innocent by reason of insanity at the time they were arraigned on April 19. Both were also charged with child abuse.

State's Attorney Andrew Sonner said his office contacted Dr. J. Thornton Boswell, of Bethesda, who did former President Kennedy's autopsy, and Dr. James Luke, another noted physician who is chief medical examiner in the District of Columbia, to gain further expert opinion on the cause of Sabrina's death.

Sonner said both doctors had agreed to make preliminary investigations before the Wards come to trial some time this summer. Judge Mathias ordered attorneys for both sides to move for a speedy trial of the case.

Sabrina was removed from her parents' custody by court order

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shortly after her birth at Montgomery General Hospital in Olney. After Gary became employed at Oakwood Farms on Md. 118, a social worker for the Department of Social Services decided to return her to her parents.

Three days later, Sabrina died. It was the second alleged child abuse death in the county within a year, and Gov. Marvin Mandel initiated an investigation into social services as a result. The agency had been involved with both families, the Wards and JoAnna and Walter Stern, of Damascus.

JoAnna, 33, was convicted of the torture slaying of her nine-year-old stepdaughter, Donna, and was sentenced to life imprisonment, also in March. Donna's father must still stand trial for his part in the child's

death.

At a hearing before Judge Mathias on May 3, Gary's mother, Mrs. Lyndall M. Ward, said the couple could live with her, and that she would be responsible for them. Sonner said he was not concerned about the release on bond and stated he was reasonably sure the Wards would show up when the trial is scheduled.

Special bond hearings were requested before Judge Mathias after Dr. Ronald Kornblum, deputy state medical examiner, issued a certificate stating that Sabrina had died of "sudden infant death syndrome" commonly called "crib death."

The contents of the death report have not been divulged by the State's Attorney's office.